



Characteristics of recent migrants

Data about migrants arriving in the last 10 years including employment outcomes relating to visa type, birth country, education and language skills

Reference period November 2019

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Key statistics

At November 2019:

- 1.9 million people in Australia were recent migrants or temporary residents
- 50% had permanent visas or had become Australian citizens
- 68% of recent migrants and temporary residents were employed, with a labour force participation rate of 72%
- 69% of recent migrants held a non-school qualification before arriving in Australia and 35% had obtained a non-school qualification after arriving in Australia

Overview

The Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey (CoRMS) was conducted across Australia in November 2019 as a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey. Topics include employment and how finding work relates to visa type, education, language skills or other characteristics.

The CoRMS provides information about people who have come to Australia in the last 10 years and were either:

- recent migrants - on a permanent visa or had become Australian citizens since arrival, or,
- temporary residents - on a temporary visa, with the intention to stay for one year or more on arrival.

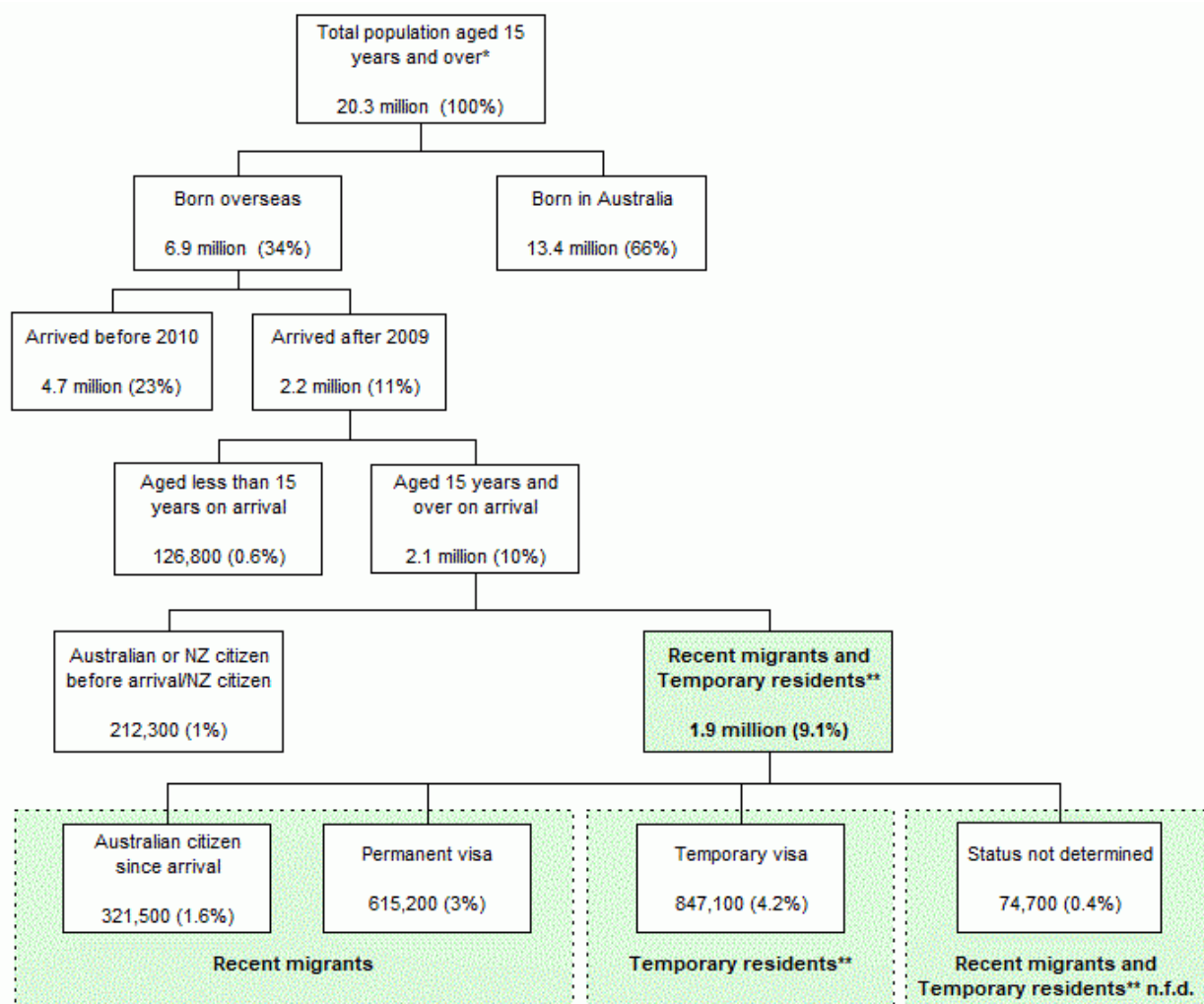
At November 2019, 9.1% of the Australian population aged 15 years or over (1.9 million people) were recent migrants or temporary residents:

- 50% were recent migrants (615,200 had a permanent visa and 321,500 were now Australian citizens)
- 46% were temporary residents (847,100 had temporary visas). (Table 1)

People who were an Australian or New Zealand citizen before arrival, or held New Zealand citizenship as at November 2019, are not included in this analysis.

The following diagram shows the estimates for the Australian population aged 15 years and over, by migration status.

Persons aged 15 years and over, migration status as at November 2019



*Total population in scope of the Labour Force Survey (see Methodology page)

**Only includes temporary residents who on arrival intended to stay for 1 year or more.

On arrival to live in Australia the majority of recent migrants (83%) and temporary residents (82%) were aged 20-44 years. (Table 3)

- 59% of recent migrants were female.
- 55% of temporary residents were male.

Of the 1.2 million people who had a temporary visa on arrival to live in Australia, over a quarter (27%) had since obtained either:

- a permanent visa (54%), or
- Australian citizenship (47%) (Table 8)

Of those who had obtained a permanent visa, 56% held a Skilled visa and 41% held a Family visa. (Table 8)

See Tables 1, 3 and 8 in the Data downloads section for more detail.

Labour market outcomes

Respondents to the survey were asked about their employment prior to arriving in Australia, their current employment status and their occupation before and after arrival.

See Tables 2, 3 and 15 in the Data downloads section for more detail.

Employment

In November 2019, 68% of the 1.9 million recent migrants and temporary residents were employed.

- Migrants who had obtained Australian citizenship since arrival were more likely to be employed (76%) than migrants on a permanent visa (66%), or temporary residents (65%).
- Of those employed, 77% of people with Australian citizenship and 75% on a permanent visa were employed full-time, compared with 48% of temporary residents.

Overall, men were more likely to be employed full-time than women:

- 90% of employed male recent migrants were employed full-time compared with 63% of females
- 52% of employed male temporary residents were employed full-time compared with 40% of females (Table 2)

A higher proportion of recent migrants (70%) were employed, compared with people born in Australia (65%). They were also more likely to be employed full-time (76% vs 68%). (Table 2)

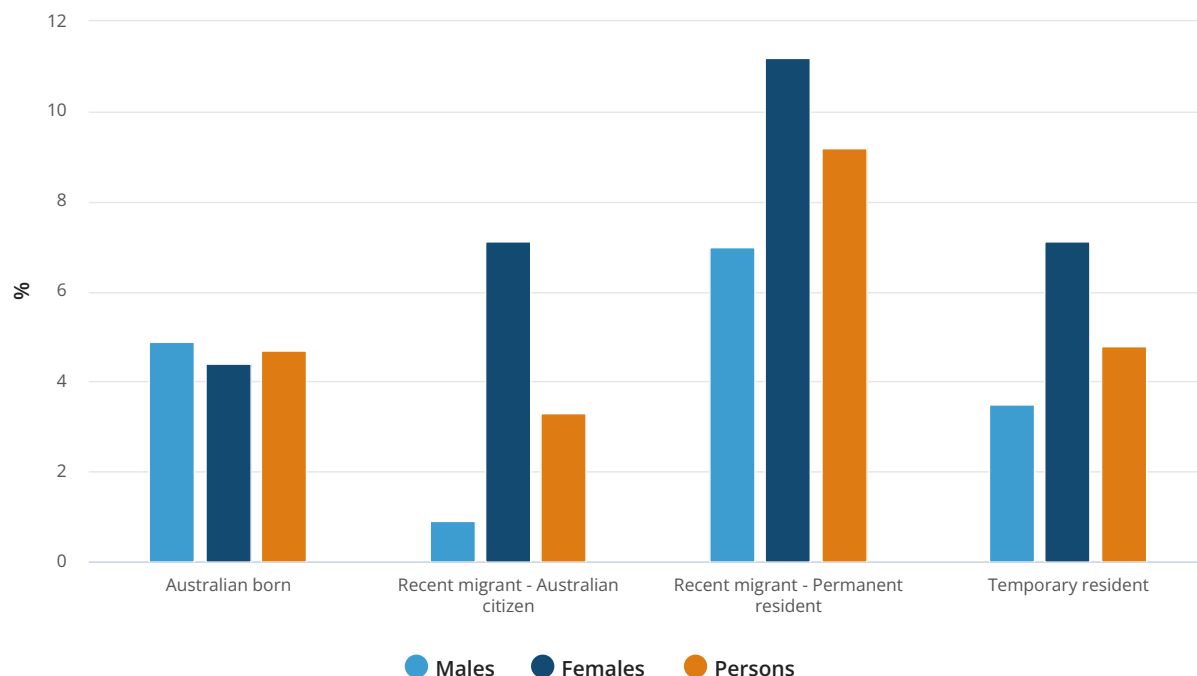
Unemployment rate

While the overall unemployment rate was higher for recent migrants and temporary residents than for people born in Australia (5.9% vs 4.7%), it varied across the different migrant groups:

- 3.3% for migrants with Australian citizenship
- 4.8% for temporary residents
- 9.2% for migrants on a permanent visa (Table 2 and Graph 1)

Female recent migrants and temporary residents had a higher unemployment rate than males (8.3% vs 3.9%). (Table 3)

Graph 1 - unemployment rate by residency type as at November 2019 and



Labour force participation rate

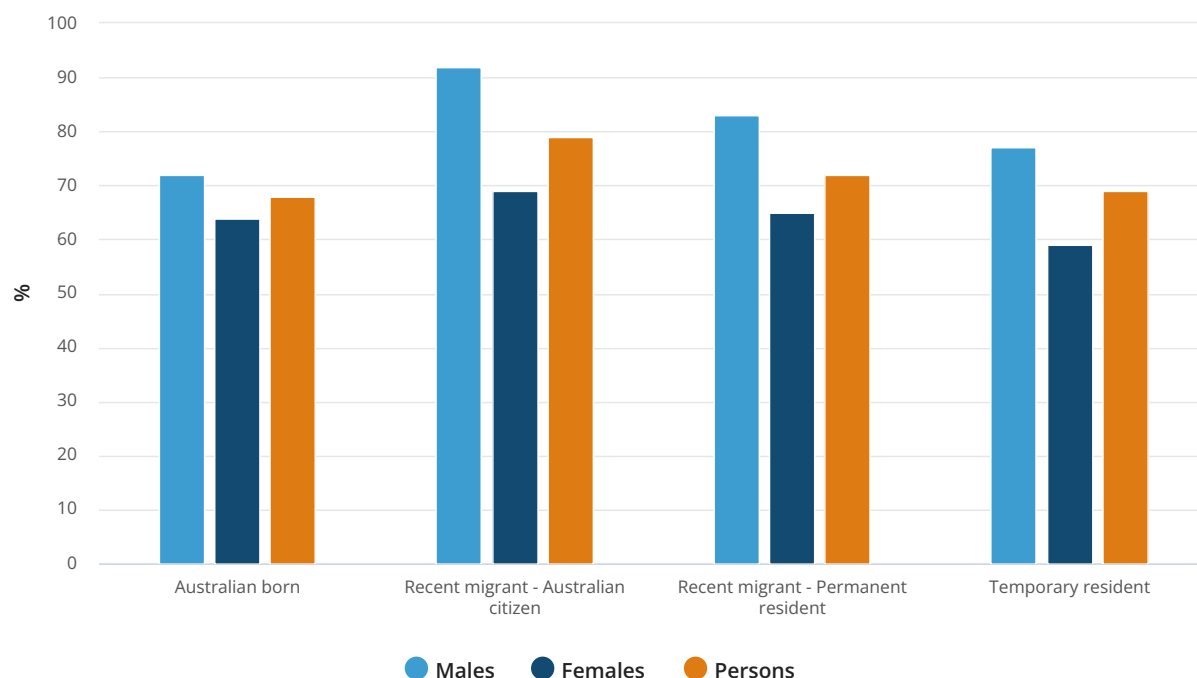
The labour force participation rate was higher for recent migrants and temporary residents than for people born in Australia (72% vs 68%).

Overall, men had higher labour force participation rates than women:

- 92% for male recent migrants with Australian citizenship compared with 69% for females
- 83% for males on a permanent visa compared with 65% for females
- 77% for males on a temporary visa compared with 59% for females

In comparison, for men and women born in Australia, the labour force participation rates were 72% and 64%, respectively. (Table 2 and Graph 2)

Graph 2 - labour force participation rate by residency type as at November 2019 and sex



The labour force participation rate was higher for those recent migrants who:

- arrived in Australia with a non-school qualification (82%, vs 59% for those who did not)
 - had obtained a non-school qualification since arrival (87%, vs 69% for those who had not)
- (Table 3)

Finding employment

Around 1 in 10 recent migrants who have had a job in Australia arrived with their first job arranged, whereas 44% spent up to three months looking for their first job. (Table 15)

Among recent migrants who have had a job since arrival, almost half (48%) received some form of help to find their first job, most commonly from friends or family (69%).

A third (33%) reported experiencing some difficulty finding their first job. The most common difficulties were:

- a lack of Australian work experience or references (65%)
- a lack of local contacts or networks (29%)
- language difficulties (25%) (Table 15)

Education

Respondents were asked about qualifications they had obtained prior to arriving in Australia and if they were recognised in Australia, whether their qualifications were used in their first job and whether they had obtained any qualifications since arrival.

See Tables 3, 11, 15, 16 and 17 in the Data downloads section for more detail.

Recent migrants

An estimated 69% of recent migrants held a non-school qualification before arriving in Australia, of whom:

- 79% had a Bachelor Degree or higher
- 13% had an Advanced Diploma or Diploma
- 5.5% had a Certificate level qualification (Table 3)

The most common fields of study of pre-migration qualifications were:

- management and commerce (25%)
- engineering and related technologies (19%)
- health (12%) and information technology (12%) (Table 16)

Of those recent migrants who applied, 90% had their overseas qualification recognised. (Table 16)

Of those who had a job since arriving in Australia, 54% had used their highest non-school qualification in their first job. (Table 15)

Over a third (35%) of recent migrants had obtained a non-school qualification since arriving in Australia. Of these, around half (48%) had obtained a Bachelor Degree or higher. (Table 3)

Around a quarter (24%) of recent migrants who arrived without a non-school qualification had since obtained one in Australia. (Table 11)

Skilled visa holders

Among skilled visa holders who were main applicants:

- 86% had a non-school qualification before arrival, and 72% were using that qualification

in their current job (Table 17)

- 57% had two or more jobs since arrival
- 47% were currently employed as professionals (Table 17)

Temporary residents

An estimated 61% of temporary residents had a non-school qualification before arriving in Australia. Of these, 80% had a Bachelor Degree or higher. (Table 3)

More than a third (39%) of temporary residents had obtained a non-school qualification since arriving in Australia, with 71% of these completing a Bachelor Degree or higher. (Table 3)

Household income

Wages or salary was the main source of household income reported:

- 87% of recent migrants
- 78% of temporary residents (Table 10 in the Data downloads section)

The proportion reporting wages or salary as their main source of household income gradually increased with length of stay in Australia:

- 65% of the most recent arrivals (arrived 2019)
- 88% of those who arrived between 2010 and 2015 (Table 10 in the Data downloads section)

Data downloads

Data item list

[↓ Download XLS](#)
[474 KB]

Tables

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[928 KB]

Tables compressed

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History of changes

Show all

15/06/2020 - Updated diagram formatting on 'Overview' page. No changes to data, as well as formatting of 'Household income' page. No changes to data.

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6250.0.

Methodology

[Characteristics of Recent Migrants, Australia methodology, November 2019](#)